

From the Pastor's desk

*Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself
(1 John 3:3).*

just as he is pure

What a powerful motivation this is to become like Him now; to accept your circumstances, to stop quarreling with what God sends to you, and begin in everything to give thanks, allowing these strange instruments of God's grace to do their work in your life. Paul says, suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3-4).

A few experiences like this and you know absolutely that God is adequate, that He is able to work everything out. You know that every testing is another opportunity for God to demonstrate His great ability to work things out. Thus hope does not disappoint (Romans 5:5); it gives confidence, a sense of unbeatable confidence that keeps you poised and assured under any circumstance. All that is what happens now, as God begins to work through our circumstances to make us like Him. That is why John says that all those who have this kind of hope—this certainty—and understand this process purify themselves, even as Christ is pure.

But you say, Purify myself? That's the one thing I can't do. That is true. God knows that. He knows you cannot purify yourself, yet here He says to purify yourself. What does He mean? You purify yourself when you use the means He has provided for purification. You mothers know how this works. Your little boy has been playing outside and is covered with dirt. He comes in, and you send him into the bathroom to purify himself. Like all boys, he turns on the water, runs his hands through it, turns the water off, wipes his hands on the towel, and comes out. You look him over and say, But you're not clean.

Well, he says, I washed myself.

But look at the dirt on your hands and on your arms and on your face and behind your ears. You're not clean at all. Then every wise mother asks, Did you use soap? Of course he hasn't, so she sends him back to use soap. What is soap? It is a purifying agent, a cleansing agent. It will do the job if it is employed. So when he comes back the second time, he has washed with soap, and the soap has cleansed him, purified him. Now he says, Look, Mom, I've cleaned myself up. It is true that he did it, but he did it by using his mother's provision.

The provision for our cleansing is the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:7). If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). This means we must begin to take seriously this matter of a break of fellowship with Christ because of an impatient spirit or an ugly word or a lustful idea or thought that we have dwelt on. We must realize the stain of it does not disappear with the passage of time. It has interfered with our fellowship with the Son of God, and we must do something about it. We cannot simply forget it; we must do something about it. We must purify ourselves using His provision, that we might be clean.

Say this prayer

Lord, teach me to purify myself using the means You have given to me to do it. Amen